

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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R 162207Z MAR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: CASC, OGEN, NP

SUBJECT:PERMIT TO CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST -- REVEREND FORD

1. FORD CALLED DEPARTMENT MARCH 12 TO COMPLAIN ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF USG ENDORSEMENT WHICH HE ALLEGES HAS HURT HIS CHANCES OF SECURING PERMIT. AFTER NEPAL DESK OFFICER TELLEEN EXPLAINED STATE OF PLAY, HE SEEMED SOMEWHAT MOLLIFIED. DURING COURSE OF LENGTHY AND RAMBLING CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, FORD SAID INTER ALIA THAT WHILE HE IS GOING ALONG WITH NEPALESE INSISTENCE ON GROUP APPLICATION, HE WILL CARRY OUT HIS ORIGINAL SCHEME TO CLIMB MOUNTAIN SOLO ONCE HE GETS THERE. HE ALSO STATED THAT ALTHOUGH HE IS TELLING THE NEPALESE THAT HIS CLIMB WILL BE IN THE LATTER PART OF THE REGULAR CLIMBING SEASON, HE IN FACT INTENDS TO REMAIN ON THE MOUNTAIN UNTIL WINTER TO ATTEMPT SUMMIT CLIMB ON CHRISTMAS DAY OR LATER.

2. IN COURSE OF MARCH 15 SESSION WITH EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY BASNYAT, DEPTOFFS KUX AND TELLEEN EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT EVEREST EXPEDITION PERMIT QUESTION REMAINS UNRESOLVED AND REVIEWED LATEST CONVERSATION WITH FORD. BASNYAT SAID HE WAS ALSO PUZZLED IN VIEW OF FORD'S CONDUCT,

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ABOUT WHICH MFA HAD COMPLAINED, AND IN VIEW OF OUR WITH-

DRAWAL OF THE USG ENDORSEMENT. BASNYAT INDICATED THAT

HE WOULD CHECK FURTHER WITH KATHMANDU.

3. APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S CONTINUING EFFORTS TO UNRAVEL
THIS PROBLEM. WE ARE UNCLEAR HERE ABOUT "LEGAL"
QUESTIONS MENTIONED IN KATHMANDU'S 1085 AND WOULD
APPRECIATE SOME ELABORATION. IN SHORT, WHAT IS THE
PROBLEM? IN VIEW OF THE TIME DEADLINE FACED BY TRIMBLE
AND LATEST DISCUSSION WITH FORD, BELIEVE IT WOULD BE
APPROPRIATE FOR EMBASSY TO RAISE ONCE MORE WITH MFA. KISSINGER

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